

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 SOFIA 00291 190724Z

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ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 /016 W

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R 181417Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9226

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: OEXC, BU

SUBJECT: PLOVDIV/FORT WAYNE SISTER CITIES

REF: STATE 010363

1. HAVING RECEIVED LETTER FROM CITY OF FORT WAYNE DATED FEBRUARY 4 IN WHICH THEY EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT PLOVDIV HAD NOT YET RESPONDED TO FORMAL INVITATION TO AFFILIATE DATED DECEMBER 1973, I WENT TO PLOVDIV FEB 17 AND TALKED WITH MAYOR (CHAIRMAN OF CITY COUNCIL) PARIKIAN.

2. PARIKIAN WAS UNDER IMPRESSION THAT AFFILIATION ALREADY EXISTS. HE POINTED TO HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH MAYOR LEBAMOFF, GIFTS HE HAD SENT TO FORT WAYNE, INTERESTING MATERIALS RECEIVED FROM THERE, AND STILL-OUTSTANDING INVITATION TO LEBAMOFF TO COME TO PLOVDIV THIS SPRING. HE ALSO PRODUCED PRESS CLIPPING FROM FORT WAYNE NEWS-SENTINEL WHICH GAVE IMPRESSION THAT AFFILIATION WAS ONGOING REALITY.

3. HOWEVER, HE RECOGNIZED THAT FORMAL STEP STILL NEEDS TO BE TAKEN, PROMISED TO TAKE UP WITH MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, AND FORECAST EARLY FAVORABLE ACTION. HE AWARE OF ROLE OF SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL IN FORMALIZATION PROCESS. NOT CLEAR WHAT ROLE IF ANY AMBASSADOR POPOV HAS PLAYED, BUT HE WAS MENTIONED AS HAVING BEEN HELPFUL.

4. I AM WRITING DIRECTLY TO HOWARD CHAPMAN, CHAIRMAN OF SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE, CITY OF FORT WAYNE.

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5. COMMENT: WE HAVE POSSIBILITY OF AN ANTI-CLIMAX IF AFTER PRODDING PLOVDIV FORMALLY ACCEPTS FORT WAYNE'S PROPOSAL AND NOTHING MORE HAPPENS THAN WHAT HAS GONE ON UP TO NOW. BELIEVE AT APPROPRIATE TIME FORT WAYNE SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE A BIT OF A SPLASH WITH THE FORMAL AFFILIATION CEREMONY AND TO SEND SOME BULGARIAN-AMERICAN VISITORS TO PLOVDIV WHEN THIS IS CONVENIENT.

6. FYI: PLOVDIV HAS ONGOING AFFILIATIONS WITH KISHINEV (USSR), LEIPZIG (GDR), BRNO (CZECHOSLOVAKIA), POZNAN (POLAND), ZAGREB (YUGOSLAVIA), OKAYAMA (JAPAN), FERRARA (ITALY) AND ESKISEHIR (TURKEY). NEVERTHELESS THERE SEEMS TO BE SPECIAL INTEREST IN FORT WAYNE AFFILIATION BECAUSE OF ETHNIC BULGARIANS THERE, AND OF COURSE THERE IS GREAT CURIOSITY ABOUT AMERICA.  
HERZ

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